

I support media diversity

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen from Seattle to comment on Docket No. 02-277, The Biennial Review of the FCC's broadcast media ownership rules. In its goals to promote competition, diversity and localism in today's media market, I strongly believe that the FCC should retain all of the current media ownership rules now in question, and consider strengthening regulations to safeguard media diversity. These rules serve the public interest by limiting the market power of already huge companies in the broadcast industry.

I do not believe that the studies commissioned by the FCC accurately demonstrate the negative affects media deregulation and consolidation have had on media diversity. As Canada's deregulation has shown, deregulation can and had led to increased monopolies and control of public airwaves by the few. While there may be indeed be more sources of media than ever before, the spectrum of views presented have become more limited as the diversity of views within the media have not risen.

The right to carry on informed debate and discussion of current events is part of the founding philosophy of our nation. Our forefathers believed that democracy was best served by a diverse marketplace of ideas. If the FCC allows our media outlets to merge, our ability to have open, informed discussion with a wide variety of viewpoints will be compromised. Adam Smith did not believe in a free market that suppressed diversity, squashed individualism and equality of possibility for success.

The public interest will best be served by preserving media ownership rules in question in this proceeding.

In addition to the official hearing on this matter in Richmond, VA, I STRONGLY urge the FCC to hold additional hearings elsewhere around the nation to solicit the widest possible participation from the public which will be the most directly affected by the outcomes of these decisions. I think it is important for the FCC to not only consider the points of view of those with a financial interest in this issue, but also those with a social or civic interest. The airwaves and media outlets are here to serve us...our voices on this matter must and will be heard.

With the serious impact these rule changes will have on our democracy, it is incumbent on the Commission to take the time to review these issues more thoroughly and allow the American people to have a meaningful say in the process. To do otherwise would be to betray your position, your authority and the trust with which the American people have assigned you to uphold.

Thank you,
Rachel Hein